



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Address by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Sharon White
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 3, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is indeed a pleasure to welcome NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer back to Vienna. We recall that you last appeared before many of us at the 2003 Maastricht Ministerial in your role as Chairman-in-Office, just a month before you took up your current responsibilities as NATO Secretary General.

Given your experience leading both the OSCE and NATO, I think it is probably fair to say that no one appreciates more the need for the two organizations to work closely together. No one, more significantly, has done more to promote such cooperation.

As you noted, it was under your leadership at Maastricht in 2003, that participating States adopted the "OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century." This important document signaled the OSCE's intention to expand its relations with NATO, as well as with the UN, the EU, and the Council of Europe, as a means of promoting comprehensive security in the OSCE area. Since the Strategy was adopted, cooperation between the OSCE and NATO, already strong in some areas, has gotten even better.

In fact, the OSCE and NATO, we would argue, are in many ways developing a model of how two international organizations can work together pragmatically and non-competitively in the same areas with the same common overall objective.

NATO's Partnership for Peace program, which promotes defense reform throughout the OSCE region, remains a natural and important complement to the work our field missions and institutions do in conflict prevention, post-conflict rehabilitation, and institution building.

Nowhere have OSCE and NATO efforts been more effective and complementary than in Southeastern Europe, where the two organizations have worked together for over a decade now to keep the peace, verify arms control agreements, and build functioning democratic and multi-ethnic governments.

While the need for NATO peacekeeping troops has steadily diminished over the years as stability in the western Balkans has increased, the Alliance continues to play an important role in helping Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia reform their armed forces. In addition, both the OSCE, through its largest field mission, and NATO, with its 16,000 KFOR troops, remain committed to playing key roles in Kosovo as it prepares to embark on final status talks.

Through quarterly informal staff talks, NATO and the OSCE are now discussing issues related to border security, excess munitions disposal, small arms, and outreach to Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus. As you noted, the OSCE is working closely with NATO on projects to destroy surplus small arms and light weapons and ammunition.

Mr. Secretary General, we would agree with you that there is much unfinished work for both the OSCE and NATO to do in helping to bring stability and prosperity throughout the OSCE region. The United States is confident that both organizations will remain fully committed to this goal and will identify steps to reinforce each other's efforts where appropriate.

At the same time, however, the United States is a major proponent of the need for NATO to transform itself so that it can respond effectively to challenges and threats that increasingly emanate from areas outside of the Europe and Eurasia. We welcome the comments you shared with us today in this regard.

Naturally, the OSCE's main focus must remain on its 55 participating States. But just as NATO is expanding its outreach to the Mediterranean, the broader Middle East, and points beyond, we here at the OSCE are looking to build stronger relationships with our Mediterranean and Asian partners for cooperation.

The dispatch of election support teams to observe the presidential and parliamentary elections in Afghanistan is a model of what the OSCE can and should do to help build stability in areas outside of its traditional boundaries. The OSCE's support for Afghanistan's elections complements NATO's work of providing stability and security in Afghanistan, including during the historic elections.

Mr. Secretary General, the U.S. looks forward to working with you to find further areas, both inside and outside Europe and Eurasia, where the OSCE and NATO can work productively together.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.